

Dear Outdoor Recreation Committee Clerk,
Please share with Committee members as they consider diverting MNRTF monies to unrelated projects and critical but unfunded infrastructure improvements. My note attached to Senator Rick Jones, briefly covers the rationale to maintain the MNRTF in its current status.
Thank you,
John Greenslit
Eaton County Parks

From: John Greenslit
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2013 3:07 PM
To: 'The Office of Senator Jones'
Subject: MNRTF

Senator Jones,

Despite the momentum in the Michigan Senate to seek resources for roads, bridges and harbor dredging, the invasion into the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for these projects clearly violates the 1975 creation and implementation of this program in the State Constitution. Making these projects eligible only weakens the already fragile resources for Counties, Cities, Villages and other eligible entities.

As you know, I was one of the original sponsors and authors of the Legislation. This diversion was never the intent of the Legislature or Michigan voters that have approved this on 3 separate state-wide votes. While the logic and intent has some traction in local District's, the Act must be preserved. It would be terrible public policy to divert these funds. I have examined the Governor's budget consideration and concur that other funds have been escrowed to address this through Waterways and other federal funding.

As we have discussed, it serves no public purpose to dismantle and devastate the functions of the Department of Natural Resources and their historic record of excellent resource management. I hope you can persuade your fellow Senators to retain the original intent of the Act, and abandon this as a target for diversion. The concept that "dredging is not maintenance", prohibited in the Act, is a stretch of the definition and highly distorted.

In an "ideal world", which does not exist, the concept of the originators designed a program of limits for acquisition and development projects in exchange for operations and maintenance in perpetuity and provisions to require local matching funds in every project. As you well know, 100 per cent grants are almost worthless in many of our federal program, reflecting no accountability. So, this model of Trust Funds based on this partnership concept is a model for the nation.

Finally, the responsibility for infrastructure improvements is extremely burdensome in our Park system. However, it is our responsibility. By diverting funds and making these previously committed obligations now eligible will literally destroy the entire intent of the Trust Fund.

I hope the Senate Caucus will discreetly slow this momentum and retain the provisions of 39 years of success. Speaking as well for the Michigan Recreation and Park Association, the Michigan Association of County Park and Recreation Officials and related organizations,

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